

Iron Sharpens Iron

**A Comparative Study of the Advanced Military Studies Program
and the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies**

A Monograph

by

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Abstract

IRON SHARPENS IRON: A Comparative Study of the Advanced Military Studies Program and the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies by Major Stephen E. Olson, U.S. Air Force, 58 pages.

This monograph comparatively studies the U.S. Army's Advanced Military Studies Program (AMSP) and the U.S. Air Force's School of Advanced Air and Space Studies (SAASS). Though similar in many ways, the schools are unique in origins, purpose, and curriculum. Notable differences include AMSP's emphasis on graduating operational planners who are fluent in operational art, whereas SAASS creates strategists, fluent in the national strategic discourse. Both schools will send their graduates to influential staff positions where they will have direct influence upon senior military leadership decision making. This monograph seeks to better each school by studying the other school's methods. Areas of improvement noted include balancing the study of operations and strategy, balancing the educational element of application in the theory, evidence, and application model, as well as re-examining both the faculty construct and the student-to-faculty ratios. Both schools have and will continue to graduate outstanding officers who provide a "leavening influence" within the U.S. military, but there are also opportunities to sharpen the sword.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

Since the 1983 inception of the U.S. Army's Advanced Military Studies Program (AMSP) as part of the School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS), the U.S. military has progressively strived to advance the education of its mid-level officers.¹ Much of this effort resulted from a perception that the established schools for mid-level officers (O-4s), namely the Army's Command and General Staff School (CGSS) and the Air Force's Air Command and Staff College (ACSC), were not up to the standards of the programs' critics. Instead of seeking to correct the issues at CGSS and ACSC, some officers chose to start anew. They did so by designing a second year of intense academics designed to address the previous year's shortcoming and move a small group of students into a higher level of knowledge and capability.

The result for the U.S. Army was AMSP, with the first class graduating in 1984. For the Air Force, the first class of students graduated from the School of Advanced Airpower Studies (SAAS) in 1992.² The Army and Air Force both have senior level schools for Lieutenant Colonels and Colonels, the Army War College and Air War College respectively, but AMSP and SAASS are still considered the premier schools of each service's Professional Military Education (PME) system. Not resting on their laurels, both schools should consider methods to sharpen their programs further, including examining each other's programs. With that in mind, this monograph's primary research question asks what can AMSP and SAASS learn from each other in order to improve the quality of their program and graduates? The author's thesis is that both programs can improve their programs by considering each other's curriculum, faculty construct, and faculty-student interaction.

¹The School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) encompasses both the Advanced Military Studies Program (AMSP) for Intermediate Learning Education (ILE) graduates and the Advanced Operational Art Studies Fellowship (AOASF) for Senior Service School Equivalent Education. Graduates of both are considered "SAMS Graduates." AMSP, in particular, will be compared to SAASS in this paper.

²In 2003, the school title was changed to "School of Advanced Air and Space Studies" or SAASS. Hereafter, the school will be referred to as SAASS.

AMSP and SAASS each have a different mission or purpose expressed through their curriculum, though many similarities. Both programs seek to graduate mid-level officers who are erudite, able to write, present cogent arguments, and confidently brief senior leadership. Both programs have a significant amount of reading in order to introduce the students to a broad array of thinking in various fields of study. The schools diverge in their overall focus on war. If you ask most officers in the Army, “What does an AMSP graduate do?” they will say that, “An AMSP graduate is a planner.” AMSP focuses on operational art - the skills necessary to plan operations at a Corps or Division. Ask any Air Force officer, “What does a SAASS graduate do?” and they will not likely have an answer. This can be attributed to the relatively low number of graduates, the limited impact that graduates have had in the Air Force thus far, and also the ambiguity of what SAASS itself seeks to produce – strategists. SAASS focuses on producing students who are fluent in the national strategic discourse, but lacking a clear definition of strategy or strategist, the school struggles to sell its product.

Post-graduate assignments are a significant influence on this divergence between the operational and strategic focus. Most assignments for Army AMSP graduates are to a Division or Corp staff where they are operational planners. Though that assignment is likely to last only one year, their reputation as a planner continues throughout their career. Air Force SAASS graduates commonly go to Air Force Headquarters or Combatant Commands, where they will work strategic and operational issues. This narrow focus on either operations or strategy may benefit each service in the short term, but potentially limits the impact of the officers throughout their careers. A SAASS graduate who is unable to lead an operational planning team or an AMSP graduate who fails to understand the strategic context of theater operations will reflect poorly on their school, the graduate, and limit the graduate’s effectiveness. Additionally, graduates of both programs have and will attain flag officer rank, requiring in-depth knowledge of both operational and strategic levels of war. Therefore, graduates of both schools will benefit from a more balanced approach to the study of war.

Before continuing, it is appropriate to bound this thesis with some definitions, particularly strategy, operations, and tactics. It is critical to understand how each school defines these terms, due to its influence on their mission. The Joint Publications (JP) definitions are a shared starting point. JP 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* defines *Strategy* as, “A prudent idea or set of ideas for employing the instruments of national power in a synchronized and integrated fashion to achieve theater, national, and or multinational objectives.”³ The focus, therefore, of strategy is on using all “instruments of national power” or an ends-ways-means analysis of the appropriate use of diplomatic, informational, military, and economic instruments of power to achieve the desired objectives. Military strategy in particular, or the focus on the use of the military instrument of power, fits within the context of the other instruments of national power and the strategic end state.

SAASS does not provide its own definition of strategy, though the concept is central to the school’s curriculum. The word *strategy* writ large is often misunderstood, taking many forms and uses depending on the user. Such ambiguity may explain why SAASS chooses not to provide its own definition, but it also makes evaluating the success of its program, one that develops *strategists*, very difficult. One definition may provide a better understanding of how the school views *strategy*. Dr. Everett Dolman, a professor at SAASS, defines strategy in his book, *Pure Strategy*, as “a plan for attaining continuing advantage.”⁴ The definitions are notably more abstract than the JP 1-02 definition, allowing for a justifiably broader scope of study for SAASS in its mission to produce strategists.

³Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2010), 446.

⁴Everett Dolman, *Pure Strategy: Power and principle in the Space and Information Age* (New York, NY: Frank Cass, 2005), 6.

Tactics encompasses the other end of the military spectrum and is defined in JP 1-02 as, “The employment and ordered arrangement of forces in relation to each other.”⁵ This is where air mission commanders execute a mission and divisions fight a battle. The link between the tactics and strategy is operations. The *operational level of war* is defined in JP 1-02 as, “The level of war at which campaigns and major operations are planned, conducted, and sustained to achieve strategic objectives within theaters or other operational areas.”⁶ AMSP uses the Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-0 *Unified Land Operations* definition of *operational art* as, “the pursuit of strategic objectives, in whole or in part, through the arrangement of tactical actions in time, space, and purpose.”⁷ It is at this level that target selection is refined, mission packages are arranged in relation to one another, and campaigns (air or land) are planned and integrated. Though a bit simplistic, it can be said that tactical battles are nested within operational campaigns, which are nested within a strategic war. Likewise, the objectives of the battle (tactics) should nest within the campaign objectives (operations) which, in turn, should nest within the strategic objectives (strategy) of the war.

Methodology

Chapter Two presents a methodical analysis of each school’s background and construct. This starts with a look at each school’s origins and history. Each school began with a specific vision of what qualities and capabilities its graduates should possess, therefore understanding the history will offer insight into the original purpose and how that purpose has evolved. Next, the study examines the admissions process, student body, and faculty. Finally, the study reviews the current syllabi, examining whether each school achieves its purpose through the curriculum.

⁵Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, JP 1-02, 459.

⁶*Ibid.*, 340.

⁷Department of the Army Headquarters, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-0, *Unified Land Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2011), 9.

Chapter Three focuses on the post-graduation experience, starting with the types of assignments graduates receive. These “utilization” tours and the education required to succeed therein, will clarify what graduates need from their education. The context of the utilization tours also establishes a focus for evaluating post-graduation surveys. This data will aid in evaluating the school’s curriculum in light of the post-graduate experience. Taken together, the data should reveal what graduates found most valuable and what was missing in the school curriculum for preparing them to succeed in their follow-on job and beyond. Finally, surveys of commanding officers and supervisors will analyze senior leadership’s satisfaction with the “product” that each school is sending out.

Chapter Four presents the study’s findings while Chapter Five concludes with recommendations for each school. The examination of each school’s strengths and weaknesses in Chapters Two and Three is the basis for recommended improvements. The recommendations will focus on utilizing the strengths of the other program, thus answering the primary research question.

Chapter 2 - School Origins, History, and Purpose

AMSP and SAASS occupy a similar niche in the US Army and Air Force PME programs, yet their origins are unique. These origins have helped to define each school's main purpose, which have remained largely unchanged since their inception. Two factors that influence each school's curriculum are the original purpose in establishing each school and what the Army and Air Force want from their Advanced Studies Graduates (ASG). This section will explore AMSP's then SAASS's origins, history, and purpose for its graduates.

AMSP's Origins

The vision for AMSP was born out of the post-Vietnam Army, which was studying every aspect of training and preparation within its ranks. A 1978 study by General Bernard W. Rogers, titled "Review of Education and Training for Officers" or RETO, found that the majority of Lieutenant Colonels and Colonels surveyed were more interested in subordinates that were "doers" and not "thinkers."⁸ In contrast to this perspective, others were seeing an increasingly complex spectrum of conflict requiring thinkers. Colonel Huba Wass de Czege noted that CGSC and Army War College graduates "were not any better equipped to think critically and creatively about military art."⁹ Concurrently, Lieutenant General William Richardson, CGSC Commandant, saw a similar lack of "tactical judgment" in his graduates. On a trip to China in 1981, Wass de Czege shared his thoughts on education with Richardson. During that conversation, Richardson verbally tasked Wass de Czege to spend the next year studying the establishment of an advanced

⁸Kevin Benson, "School of Advanced Military Studies Commemorative History 1984-2009" (Fort Leavenworth: School of Advanced Military Studies, 2009), 4.

⁹Huba Wass de Czege, "The School of Advanced Military Studies: An Accident of History," *Military Review* (July-August 2009), 103.

military studies school.¹⁰ Wass de Czege did so and received formal approval for the school in 1982. The first class began in June 1983 with 14 students and graduated in May 1984.¹¹

A second year of school at CGSC is not a new concept. The Army had three periods in its past where a second year of school was added for some students. These were 1904 to 1917, 1919 to 1922, and 1928 to 1935.¹² The shifts back to one year of school were due to Army's need for more graduates, not any analysis of the effectiveness of one versus two-year graduates.¹³

AMSP's Purpose

Wass de Czege's original purpose was to give AMSP students a "broad, deep military education in the science and art of war at the tactical and operational levels that goes beyond the [CGSC] course."¹⁴ The "operational level of war" and "operational art" concepts were new to the Army in 1983. Operational art was first defined in the 1986 Field Manual (FM) 100-5 *Operations* as "the employment of military forces to attain strategic goals in a theater of war or theater of operations through the design, organization, and conduct of campaigns and major operations."¹⁵ The definition has changed very little since.

The first instructors, in designing the syllabus, had to balance guidance from three commanders. First was the commander of Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), General Richardson. Second was the Combined Arms Center (CAC) Commandant, Lieutenant General

¹⁰Ibid., 105.

¹¹John W. Partin, ed., *A Brief History of Fort Leavenworth 1827-1983* (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute, 15 June 1983), 45.

¹²Peter J. Schifferle, *America's School for War: Fort Leavenworth, Officer Education, and Victory in World War II* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2010), 79.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Huba Wass de Czege, "Army Staff College Level Training Study," Final Report, (U.S. Army War College, 13 June 1983), F-4.

¹⁵Department of the Army Headquarters, Field Manual 100-5, *Operations*. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, May, 1986), 10.

Jack Merritt, and third was the Deputy Commandant, Major General Crosbie Saint Junior.

Richardson saw a lack of strategic planners in the Army – those who understood regional influences on strategy, joint force capabilities, and the “national decision-making process in order to develop a strategic plan that...led to attaining the national objectives of strategy and policy.”¹⁶

Merritt’s guidance was to focus on developing strategic planners while Saint wanted a “super dooper [sic] tactician’s course.”¹⁷ The result was a syllabus that, according to one of its authors, Lieutenant Colonel Harold “Hal” Winton, was “somewhere in the middle,” which “balanced division and corps tactics with operational art.”¹⁸ Strategic planning did not make the cut.

Since its inception, AMSP has remained focused on the operational art, but seems to have transitioned to less of a focus on tactical arts to a focus solely on operations. Wass de Czege’s original intent was to produce, “broadly educated, tactical and operational planners and thinkers” while the current mission statement is, “The Advanced Military Studies Program educates members of our Armed Forces, our Allies, and the Interagency at the graduate level to become agile and adaptive leaders who are critical and creative thinkers who produce viable options to solve operational problems.”¹⁹

AMSP’s Admissions Process

Through personal experience, the author found that the application process for both schools was markedly different and worthy of a closer examination. Both schools require applicants to complete an in-residence Intermediate Level Education (ILE) course or its

¹⁶Benson, “Educating the Army’s Jedi,” 55-56.

¹⁷Benson, “25 Year History”, 6. Saint also advocated for training “strategic planners” at AMSP, but seems to have emphasized the “super dooper tactician” focus to the syllabus developer, Lieutenant Colonel Harold Winton. See Benson dissertation, page 14 for this discussion.

¹⁸Benson, “Educating the Army’s Jedi,” 15. Lieutenant Colonel (now retired and on staff at SAASS) Winton was instrumental in writing the original curriculum for both SAMS and SAASS and was an instructor at each school when they opened. He is currently a professor at SAASS.

¹⁹Ibid., 23; AMSP 12-01 Curriculum Overview Briefing, 20 May 2011.

equivalent. Since its beginnings, AMSP has sought to utilize a holistic approach to selecting students. In addition to a review of military and academic records, the applicants take a written test comprising questions ranging from tactics to geography, as well as essay questions. The applicant's Staff Group Advisor from CGSS (or equivalent) writes a recommendation letter, then each applicant interviews with one of the AMSP leadership staff. The application packages are then scored by a panel of officers and academics for selection. From this board, recommendations are passed to Army's Human Resources Command (HRC) or equivalent for sister service, inter-agency, and international students.

This process, albeit lengthy, allows the leadership at AMSP to dig deeper than just the paper of an officer's records. It allows for a more personal evaluation of an officer's potential as a student and graduate. According to Dr. Harold Winton, this allows the staff to evaluate whether or not an officer is able to "stand up as a major in front of a two star or three star and say, 'General, I recommend this course of action because...'"²⁰ Though the core of selectees is not likely affected by the lengthy application process, it does allow the board to make a more comprehensive assessment of each officer. This may be helpful in eliminating an officer with a good record but a bad attitude, or including an officer with a less than stellar record, but a "never quit" attitude.

AMSP's Student Body

AMSP has undergone a myriad of changes since its first graduating class of fourteen in 1984. The class size expanded to twenty-four the next year and then forty-eight for the third class and maintained around fifty students until smaller expansions in 2001 (fifty-nine students) and 2002 (sixty-nine students).²¹ This expansion was intended by Wass de Czege and others from the

²⁰Benson, "Educating the Army's Jedi," 28.

²¹Taken from document titled "SAMS MMAS Degree Recipients" in the Combined Arms Research Library Archives.

start. In a September 1984 memo from the Commandant of CGSC, Lieutenant General Carl Vuono, requested an expansion to forty-eight students by 1985 and “eventually” to ninety-six.²² There was no specific date for the expansion to ninety-six students.

In the years 2008 and 2009, AMSP expanded by adding one summer-start seminar and two winter-start seminars.²³ This expanded the total AMSP student body from eighty-two with six seminars to 144 students in nine seminars.²⁴ The school did so while expanding the instructor cadre in order to limit the seminar size to sixteen.

AMSP’s Faculty

In order to maintain a steady source of officer faculty, Wass de Czege developed the Advanced Operational Art Studies Fellowship (AOASF), with the first class starting in 1985. This program serves as a Senior Service College or Senior Developmental Education opportunity for sixteen Lieutenant Colonels and Colonels (or equivalent) of the Army, sister services, international military, and interagency organizations. The two-year program takes a similar, though not, identical path as AMSP. It uses a similar curriculum while also providing multiple trips abroad to U.S. and foreign military commands. Following graduation, the Army officers and some international officers spend a second year as seminar leaders in AMSP. This provides AMSP with a rotation of seminar leaders with current operational and combat experience, while allowing those senior officers to return to the force for command opportunities without significant delay.

²²Command and General Staff College memorandum for Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans, U.S. Army, dated 18 September 1984. Subject: Proposal to Increase Advanced Military Studies Program Student Enrollment. Written by Lieutenant General Carl E. Vuono, 1. Held in the Special Collections Section, Combined Arms Research Library, 3rd floor.

²³For an expanded discussion of class size increases, see Dr. Benson’s dissertation, “Educating the Army’s Jedi,” page 100, or Huba Wass de Czege’s Training Report, page F-31.

²⁴CGSC Public Affairs, “School of Advanced Military Studies Expands Program,” CGSC Public Affairs, 26 January 2009. http://www.army.mil/article/16073/School_of_Advanced_Military_Studies_expands_program/ (accessed 13 November 2011).

Wass de Czege designed the AOASF program into SAMS from the very start, though AOASF as it became was not the ideal situation that he envisioned.²⁵ Instead, it was his “Plan B” for ensuring quality instructors while satisfying Army personnel management requirements for such quality senior officers.²⁶ Because of the limitations put on these high demand officers, Army leadership reduced the program from three to two years. “Plan A” was to bring in officers who already had “a master’s degree from a “good” school, previous teaching experience, and a demonstrated ability to command.”²⁷ The three year assignment would allow them one year of team teaching and understudy while they would lead a seminar the next two years.²⁸

The method of classroom instruction and the roles of the civilian professors and military instructors have evolved throughout the school’s history. The first model, with the strong influence of the three founding instructors, was a military instructor led seminar. The civilian professors would sit in periodically, but were not primary to the discussion. As more civilian PhDs were hired, the school shifted to a team teaching method with the military instructor still the primary facilitator. With the introduction of design methodologies in the mid-2000’s, the PhDs took a more prominent role in leading the classroom discussion. This model continues to the present class, with the seminars team-taught, the civilian professors facilitating the discussion, and the military instructors helping to shape the conversation, particularly regarding military application.²⁹

²⁵Benson, “Educating the Army’s Jedi,” 93.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid., 92-93

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Discussion with Dr. G. Scott Gorman, SAMS Deputy Director for Academics, 22 March 2012.

Curriculum Overview

Both schools' curriculums use a similar model that Dr. Harold Winton labeled "theory, evidence, and application."³⁰ The similarity is likely a result of Dr. Winton being one of the first faculty members at both AMSP and SAASS. Regarding theory, Dr. Winton says that "theory courses *examine concepts* in a number of guises, including theories of decision-making, statements of classical military theory, theories of international relations, and those of deterrence. The functions of these courses are to *create a tentative propositional inventory* and to *teach the student to ask tough questions* about military art and science."³¹ Dr. Winton continues with evidence courses which, "*examine actual experience*; they are unabashedly *historical* in nature, though the definition of what constitutes history may be quite flexible. Their essential function is to provide concrete material with which the student can *test the various ideas* encountered in the theory courses."³² Finally, regarding application, Dr. Winton states that "they will include war games, evaluations of contemporary and future defense issues, training in the processes of operations centers, and articulation of personal theories."³³

How that model is fleshed out into each curriculum is a product of each school's individual mission. Therefore, this model of "theory, evidence, and application" and each school's mission statement will be used to evaluate the resultant curriculum.

AMSP's Curriculum

The AMSP Mission statement emphasizes three products as its stated goal. First is that the graduates are "agile and adaptive leaders," second they are "critical and creative thinkers" and

³⁰Harold R. Winton, interview with Richard Mustion, 2001, 78.

³¹Harold R. Winton, *Warfighting and Ethics: Selected Papers From the 2003 and 2004 Rowell Seminars*, ed. Russell Parkin (Canberra: Land Warfare Studies Centre, 2005), 20-21. Emphasis added.

³²*Ibid.*, 21. Emphasis added.

³³*Ibid.*

third they “produce viable options to solve operational problems.”³⁴ Within that context, AMSP places a heavy emphasis on solving operations problems, also known as “operational planning,” taught primarily through seven planning exercises and one staff ride to Vicksburg. Most exercises are between courses and often emphasize lessons from the recently completed course. Practical exercises in class are also scattered throughout the courses.

Following a one-week Division planning exercise welcoming the new students, the first course, *Theory of Operational Art* (TOA), has three phases over eighteen lessons. The first phase analyses theory development.³⁵ The emphasis is on theory construction and evaluation, and includes theory examples for evaluation using the studied models. The second phase focuses on “military theory in terms of its cultural and intellectual context.”³⁶ This phase approaches cultural context using Azar Gat’s *A History of Military Thought*, comparative analysis of Carl Von Clausewitz’s *On War*, and Antoine Henri Jomini’s *The Art of War*, a study of Chinese military theory through Sun Tzu’s *The Art of Warfare*, and a study of American military theory.³⁷ The final phase seeks to “apply military theory in a complex contingency using the systems approach described in joint doctrine.”³⁸ Complex systems examples include John Boyd’s theories, and strategy theories in Henry Mintzberg’s *The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning* and Everett Dolman’s *Pure Strategy*.³⁹ An assignment unique to this course is to develop a personal theory of

³⁴AMSP 12-01 Briefing, 20 May 2011.

³⁵Theory of Operational Art Syllabus for AMSP 12-01, undated, 1.

³⁶*Ibid.*, 2.

³⁷Azar Gat, *A History of Military Thought: from the Enlightenment to the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, USA, 2002); Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (New York: Princeton University Press, 1989); Antoine de Jomini, *The Art of War* (London: Greenhill Books, 2006); Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans. Samuel Griffith (London: Oxford University Press, 1971).

³⁸Theory of Operational Art Syllabus for AMSP 12-01, June 2011, 2.

³⁹John Boyd’s theories are studied through the reading of Frans P.B. Osinga, *Science, Strategy and War: The Strategic Theory of John Boyd* (Strategy and History) (New York: Routledge, 2006); Henry

war. Each student presents his or her theory in class and in writing. The intent is to refine it throughout the year and defend it during the oral comprehensive exam.

The second course follows a two-week planning exercise utilizing the Joint Operations Planning Process (JOPP). The *Evolution of Operational Art* (EOA) is a twenty-lesson examination of historical case studies in war. Each lesson uses a specific timeframe, war, or campaign in order to examine the strategic and operational context therein. The campaigns range from the American Revolution to Operation Desert Storm. Additionally, students spend two weeks on General Ulysses S. Grant's Vicksburg Campaign. This includes one week of preparatory reading and briefings, followed by a one-week Vicksburg staff ride. At the end of the course, the students are expected to be able to describe and analyze a campaign as well as be able to trace the evolution of operational art through the time period studied.

Besides the in-class campaign evaluations and briefings, students accomplish a written analysis of a campaign studied in class. The final exam is an individual, take home analysis of a campaign not studied in class. The student is expected to prepare this in the format of a course of action (COA) sketch and narrative similar to the COA sketch described in the Army Field Manual (FM) 5-0 *The Operations Process*.⁴⁰ Following EOA, there is a one-week exercise and wargame utilizing a historic scenario. This is one of the few times that the students go beyond planning and are able to wargame their plan, with nightly adjudication by the faculty affecting their plans for the next day.

Strategic Context for Operational Art (SCOA) is a twelve-lesson course that broadens the curriculum's scope in order that the students will develop "a fuller understanding of the links

Mintzberg, *The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning: Reconceiving Roles for Planning, Plans, Planners* (New York: Free Press, 1994); Dolman, *Pure Strategy*.

⁴⁰Department of the Army Headquarters, Field Manual (FM) 5-0, Change 1, *The Operations Process* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2010), B-20.

among policy, strategy, and operations in integrated planning.”⁴¹ Going beyond military strategy, this course studies the other elements of national power including diplomacy, information, and economics. Focusing on U.S. policy, the students study foreign policy traditions, diplomacy, and international relations theory. Specific focus is placed on the Cold War era and the counterinsurgencies in Vietnam and Iraq. Practical application is through two in-class student briefings focusing on specific case studies, a strategist review paper, and a final exam essay.

Following a mid-course break, the students are given a humanitarian crisis scenario for a deployment planning exercise. Students then transition to the *Design and Operational Art* course, an eighteen-lesson course based on the Army Design Methodology described in FM 5-0.⁴² FM 5-0 defines *Design* as, "a methodology for applying critical and creative thinking to understand, visualize, and describe complex, ill-structured problems and develop approaches to solve them.”⁴³ Design emphasizes that integrated planning consists of two interrelated parts: conceptual and detailed. Processes such as the Military Decision Making Process (MDMP) or JOPP aid in accomplishing detailed planning, while design emphasizes critical and creative thinking of the conceptual planning process.⁴⁴ Works studied are wide-ranging and include such diverse topics as organizational theory, systems theory, education, decision making, and learning organizations.

The Design course has four phases: Introduction, Understanding the Operational Environment, Understanding the Operational Problem, Developing an Operational Approach, and

⁴¹SCOA Syllabus 12-01, 1.

⁴²Department of the Army Headquarters, FM 5-0, Chapter 3.

⁴³Ibid., 3-1.

⁴⁴Design has its origins in such practices as architecture, where there is an integral mix of art and engineering. Though the concept of Operational Design has taken a beating in the last decade, due in large part to the overselling by SAMS to the Army, it has survived and been refined. An excellent description of Operational Design is presented by a group of SAMS instructors in the article, “Integrated Planning: The Operations Process, Design, and the Military Decision Making Process,” *Military Review* (January-February 2011), 28-35.

Practicing the Army Design Methodology.⁴⁵ The three middle blocks parallel the three elements of design methodology outlined in FM 5-0.⁴⁶ Each week concludes with a practical exercise examining a case study using design methodology. Two case study papers assignments examine whether or not the actors in the case met the goals of design.⁴⁷ The course concludes with a two week planning exercise devoted to applying the Design methodology to a realistic scenario.

Future of Operational Art is a twelve-lesson course with an objective to “draw on previous courses to synthesize elements of future operational art.”⁴⁸ Understanding that the future cannot be forecast in detail, the course instead “exposes students to a wide range of thought on future warfare, thus teaching them how to think about the future instead of what to think.”⁴⁹ With that thinking in mind, the course takes a broad ranging survey of conflict trends. This includes weapons of mass destruction (WMD), anti-access/area denial, space, cyberspace, terrorism, stability operations, and disaster relief. Students learn the scenario planning methodology and apply it during three briefings, analyzing a WMD contingency, theater campaign plan for stability operations, and a humanitarian intervention.⁵⁰ Students write one paper in which they describe a humanitarian intervention occurring 5-10 years in the future.

Two additional planning exercises are included in the curriculum. A two-week exercise utilizing the Marine Corp Planning Process is facilitated by the Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Staff Training Program (MSTP) with assistance from retired Marine General officers. The exercise timing varies according to MSTP’s availability. The capstone exercise for AMSP is

⁴⁵Dr. Bruce E. Stanley, “D300: Design and Operational Art Course Advance Sheet.” December 2011.

⁴⁶Department of the Army Headquarters, FM 5-0, 3-7.

⁴⁷Ibid., 3-2.

⁴⁸Future Operational Art 12-01 Syllabus, 1.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Ibid., 2.

a two-week Division MDMP exercise, which includes a Rehearsal of Concept (ROC) drill and the publishing of orders.

Throughout the academic year, AMSP students write a monograph of 10-12,000 words focusing on a topic related to operational art. They complete the year with an oral comprehensive exam, testing their synthesis of the broad topics covered throughout the year. Graduates receive a Master of Military Art and Science – Theater Operations degree.

SAASS's Origins

SAASS's origins are of a completely different flavor from AMSP. The school developed during the late 1980s as professional military education was being examined in light of the Goldwater-Nichols Act. Congressman Isaac "Ike" Skelton delivered five speeches on the House floor in 1987, emphasizing a "need for a long-range, cohesive military strategy."⁵¹ With failures in Vietnam and Lebanon in mind, Skelton envisioned a military education that would "develop military thinkers, planners, and strategists."⁵²

Skelton was later appointed to chair a Congressional panel on military education, which was unofficially dubbed the "Skelton Panel." During testimony, Air Force Chief of Staff, General Larry Welch was asked by Skelton "where and how the Air Force would produce the next generation of strategists."⁵³ At that time, the Airpower Research Institute (ARI) at Maxwell Air Force Base had been studying the feasibility of an advanced studies program based on the SAMS model. This concept was fused with Congressman Skelton's concerns by the Air University Commander, Lieutenant General Truman Spangrud, and passed on to General Welch. Welch later

⁵¹Congressman Isaac "Ike" Skelton, House floor speech titled "Strategy is Vital", Cong. Rec., Vol. 133, No. 200, 16 December, 1987

⁵²Statement of Congressman Skelton, House of Representatives Committee on Armed Services Military Education Panel, December 9, 1987, HASC No. 100-125.

⁵³Stephen Chiabotti, "A Deeper Shade of Blue: The School of Advanced Air and Space Studies," *Joint Forces Quarterly* no. 49 (2d quarter 2008), 74.

testified to the Skelton Panel that the Air Force was “providing an expanded strategic studies follow-on.”⁵⁴

During that period ARI was struggling with a similar problem experienced by Wass de Czege and others at CGSC - the Air Command and Staff College (ACSC) and Air War College (AWC) faculty were lacking in quality instructors. At that time, some students from each school remained at Maxwell as instructors. ARI began studying the feasibility of a second year of school “similar to SAMS” in which the students would focus on “airpower history and theory.”⁵⁵ From this original purpose, the course was re-directed to satisfy Skelton’s call for the Air Force to develop strategists.

The school continued to take form in 1988 through the Advanced Defense Studies Group (ADSG), led by an AWC instructor, Colonel George Tiller.⁵⁶ By 1990, the faculty was hired and soon after, twenty-five students were selected for the first class, which started in July 1991 and graduated in June 1992.⁵⁷

SAASS’s Purpose

The intent for SAASS and its graduates took a significant direction change from Congressman Skelton’s call for military strategists. In doing so, the school’s original intent, of preparing ACSC and AWC instructors with an in-depth knowledge of air power history and theory, morphed into a school that would study air power, but focus on strategy, strategic thought, and the strategic level of war. The argument is that airpower, being semi-independent from terrain, has the ability to produce both tactical and strategic effects. Colonel Phillip S. Meilinger,

⁵⁴General Larry Welch’s 7 June 1988 prepared remarks for the House Armed Services Committee Military Education Panel, chaired by Congressman Ike Skelton.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Air University Headquarters Office of History, “History of the Air University, 1 January 1989 – 31 December 1990: Volume 1 – Narrative” (Montgomery: Air University, 1990), 69.

⁵⁷Ibid., 70.

former SAASS Commandant, outlined this concept in “10 Propositions for Air Power.”⁵⁸ Though written after SAASS was founded, the concepts were nothing new to the Air Force and would have been commonly understood, even cultural, among those establishing SAASS. One notable proposition is that “air power is an inherently strategic force.”⁵⁹ Meilinger outlines the proposition that because air power is not limited to just attacking the enemy’s fielded forces, it therefore can have strategic and tactical effects. He reinforces this concept with another: “Airpower can conduct parallel operations at all levels of war, simultaneously.”⁶⁰ Taken together, it is understandable that if the Air Force focuses on effects at the strategic level of war, it therefore must have an intimate understanding of strategy itself, what the strategic aims of a war are, and how air power can affect those aims. SAASS’s intent to create strategists is a natural result of that strategic viewpoint of airpower.

Though it is not clear if such thinking about airpower led Colonel Tiller and the ADSC group to focus on strategy, it is clear that strategy became the primary focus when influenced by General Welch. Dr. Stephen Chiabotti, current SAASS Vice Commandant, went so far as to say that the school’s mission is to, “produce *strategists*—not leaders, not warriors, not even planners.”⁶¹ In that regard, the goal for SAASS graduates is simple, yet undefined. The school has no definition of strategy, therefore it does not define its desired product—strategists.⁶² Instead, the school takes the mantra that “Strategy is a mongrel” and so the focus is academic, with a basis

⁵⁸Phillip S. Meilinger, *10 Propositions Regarding Air Power* (Washington DC: Air Force Historical Studies Office, 1995). Meilinger was the Dean of SAASS (equivalent to current “Commandant”) from 1992-1996.

⁵⁹Ibid., 8.

⁶⁰Ibid., 34.

⁶¹Chiabotti, 74.

⁶²Ibid.

in theory and history.⁶³ Regardless, the product is most assuredly an officer who is a more proficient thinker, speaker, and writer.

The current mission of SAASS is to, “Produce strategists through advanced education in the art and science of air, space, and cyberspace power to defend the United States and protect its interests”⁶⁴ Air Force leadership reinforces the strategist focus, but with a confusing conflation of three words: operations or operational, strategy, and planning. In a 2009 ASG Utilization Guidance Memo regarding post-graduate staff assignments, Lt Gen Philip M. Breedlove, Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, Plans, & Requirements at the time, outlined assignment criteria for Air Force ASGs as follows: “Strategy and Planning Focus: Validated billets which are focused on *operational strategy, analysis and planning* consistent with ASG education.”⁶⁵ Confusion arises with the undefined term, “operational strategy.” This may infer operational level of war, or “strategy” in this case may mean “plans” as in operational plans. Another possibility is that operational in this case may mean “military,” in contrast to a political or grand strategy. More confusion is added when it states that graduates “should perform hands on *operational level strategy* work directly contributing to the planning and execution of Air Force core functions and enhancing senior leader decision making.”⁶⁶ Again, what defines “operational level strategy” is unclear, but what is clear is that the intent for ASG assignments is that they should be planning and analysis intensive at a senior leader level. The command level at which most graduates will go to also reinforces the Air Force’s emphasis on strategic-level assignments. According to Breedlove’s memo, this includes “[Headquarters] Air Force, [Combatant Numbered Air Forces],

⁶³Chiabotti, 74.

⁶⁴SAASS Home Page, <http://www.au.af.mil/au/saass/index.asp>, accessed 27 October 2011.

⁶⁵Phillip M. Breedlove to Air Force A1 (Personnel) Staff, memorandum, 12 November 2009 (Washington DC). Emphasis added. Hereafter referred to as “Breedlove Memo.”

⁶⁶Breedlove Memo. Emphasis added.

[Combatant Major Commands], Unified [Combatant Commands] and strategy-focused [Combined Air and Space Operations Center] positions.”⁶⁷

The inclusion of “Air Force core functions” in the memorandum reveals nothing about what SAASS graduates are expected to accomplish. Those core functions, stated in Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 1 and repeated in the 2011 Air Force Posture Statement, serve to “express the ways in which the Air Force is particularly and appropriately suited to contribute to national security.”⁶⁸ Ranging from “Nuclear Deterrence Operations” to “Agile Combat Support,” the list is so comprehensive that no job in the Air Force escapes its umbrella. It does, however, reinforce the notion that a SAASS graduate is expected to operate within a broad range of duties.

The confusion in the Air Force between tactical, operational, and strategic thinking and planning appears to be common amongst Air Force leaders. In a 2011 interview with Defense News, Air Force Colonel Robert Garland, commandant of the Air Force Weapons School, stated that his instructors, “create tactical leaders, strategic leaders” while later adding that the students “have been integrated and have thought strategically.”⁶⁹ These comments from the commandant of the Air Force’s tactical expertise center reflects a common, but misguided, understanding of strategy within the Air Force. Weapons School graduates have a knowledge level about Air Force operations greater than the majority of their peers (Captains/O-3s), but they graduate as tactical experts, with their expertise focused primarily on their specific weapons system. To call them “strategic leaders” puts them well out of their expected breadth of experience and into realm of staff officers and generals.

⁶⁷Breedlove Memo.

⁶⁸Air Force Headquarters, Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 1, *Air Force Basic Doctrine, Organization, and Command* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2011), 43-53; Air Force Headquarters, Fiscal Year 2012 Air Force Posture Statement (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2011), 8-28.

⁶⁹David Majumdar, “Shaping Leaders,” *Defense News*, 18 September 2011. <http://mobile.defensenews.com/story.php?i=7717154&c=FEA&s=SPE> (accessed 8 March 2012).

Though the intent and purpose of SAASS graduates varies, the essence can be summed up as strategically minded airpower advocates who are capable planners having the requisite skills necessary to enhance senior leadership decision making. These skills include creative and critical thought, as well as the ability to articulate those thoughts through spoken and written word.

SAASS's Admissions Process

In addition to the in-residence ILE requirement, SAASS applicants must have completed a regionally accredited Master's degree or have an undergraduate Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.25 or higher.⁷⁰ The selection process for SAASS includes a records review, both military and academic, a short answer question, and a two to four page essay, answering a strategy related Air Force question. This application package meets a selection board at the Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC). The Air University Commander chairs the board, which consists of five O-6 SAASS graduates and the SAASS commandant.⁷¹ The board, using very similar methods to a promotion board, will attain similar results, with the officers having the best record rising to the top. The school does not perform any testing or interviews.

SAASS's Student Body

The SAASS student body began with twenty-five students in July 1991.⁷² This number stayed consistent until it expanded in 2003 to forty students, and again expanded to sixty students

⁷⁰School of Advance Air and Space Studies (SAASS) Application Form for Class XXI – Academic Year 2011-2012. Air Force nomenclature for ILE is Intermediate Developmental Education or IDE.

⁷¹Timothy Schultz and Stephen Chiabotti, "School of Advance Air and Space Studies (SAASS)" Information Paper, Air University, 2011), 2.

⁷²Air University Headquarters Office of History, "History of the Air University, 1 January 1991 – 31 December 1992: Volume 1 – Narrative" (Montgomery: Air University, 1 June 1998), 80-81.

in 2009.⁷³ Fiscal constraints require SAASS to reduce the number of students to forty-five starting in 2012. The 2011-12 class includes forty-five active duty Air Force, two Air National Guard, two Reserve, five sister service, and six international officers.⁷⁴ This allows for nearly one sister service and one international officer per seminar.

SAASS's Faculty

SAASS, with its smaller student body still has about the same number of PhD faculty as AMSP, though the total number of instructors at AMSP is greater with the additional military instructors. The seminar groups have nine to ten students who interact with one instructor during the class session. This instructor may be an officer or a civilian, but the requirement for both is that they have a PhD in a "strategy-relevant subject."⁷⁵ That all the faculty's military officers at SAASS have a PhD is unique to SAASS.

As of 2011, the school has sixteen faculty members, consisting of six military, nine civilian, and one Air National Guard officer.⁷⁶ The goal is a 3:1 student-to-faculty ratio, though the current ratio is near 4:1. The primary purpose of the low ratio is so that each instructor has only three students to advise on their thesis.⁷⁷

The lack of quality faculty members at ACSC was one of the initial driving factors behind establishing SAASS. This was highlighted by the Skelton Panel as well as a 1985 report by then Secretary of the Air Force, Verne Orr. These reports highlighted that the instructors at ACSC, "have little or no more experience than their students and are, in general, not subject

⁷³Air University Headquarters Office of History, "History of the Air University, 1 January 2000 – 31 December 2006: Volume 1 – Narrative" (Montgomery: Air University, 2007), 31; Shultz Information Paper, 1.

⁷⁴Schultz Information Paper, 2.

⁷⁵Ibid., 1.

⁷⁶Schultz Information Paper, 1. The current (2012) number is fifteen faculty members.

⁷⁷SAASS Board of Visitors Mission Brief, November 2008.

matter experts.”⁷⁸ With that in mind, SAASS sought to establish and maintain an institution with a high quality faculty - requiring all faculty to possess a PhD in an appropriate field of study.

Because opportunities for officers to get a doctoral degree are rare, the school developed a scholarship program to allow Advanced Studies Graduates to obtain a PhD.⁷⁹ The “SAASS Faculty Development Program,” is specifically geared to provide SAASS with a regular supply of quality officer faculty. Each year, the school selects one or two Air Force students from the ASG programs to attend a civilian university doctoral program.⁸⁰ They typically finish the doctoral program, serve one operational assignment with an opportunity to command, and then return to SAASS as a faculty member for one assignment. This program ensures a solid rotation of active duty instructors with recent operational experience.

SAASS’s Curriculum

The SAASS mission is to “Produce strategists through advanced education in the art and science of air, space, and cyberspace power to defend the United States and protect its interests.”⁸¹ This mission provides a focus for the curriculum in that it should “produce strategists” and focus on “air, space, and cyberspace power.” The SAASS curriculum’s intent is spelled out succinctly on the SAASS website:

The SAASS curriculum is designed to accomplish two major objectives. The first is to *enhance students' ability to think critically about airpower and warfare* through an extensive examination of both theory and historical experience. This examination leads to a reasoned synthesis that informs the question of how modern airpower can be best applied across the entire spectrum of conflict. The second objective is to *cultivate students' ability to argue effectively and responsibly about airpower*. This objective is accomplished by having students introduce and defend propositions in graduate

⁷⁸Skelton Panel Final Report, 188.

⁷⁹A second PhD program, or “Lorenz Fellowship,” is discussed in SAASS Post-Graduate Assignments. It is not used to educate future SAASS faculty, but instead allows graduates to write a dissertation in lieu of attending Senior Service School or Senior Developmental Education.

⁸⁰Schultz Information Paper, 1.

⁸¹SAASS Home Page, <http://www.au.af.mil/au/saass/curriculum.asp>, accessed 21 December 2011.

colloquia, produce interpretive arguments in prose that meet publication standards, and reduce complex formal arguments into comprehensible briefings.

Although graduate colloquia dominate the curriculum, SAASS uses other instructional methodologies as well. These include a major computer-assisted war game, an annual staff ride, case studies, and guest speakers.⁸²

The course is a fifty-week, seminar-based program. For the 2011-2012 academic year, there are eleven courses, most of which conclude with a ten page argumentative essay assignment.

The first course, *Foundations of Strategy*, is a twelve-lesson “examination of some theories, methods, and concepts that inform strategy and decision-making.”⁸³ This course surveys a broad range of theories on strategy and decision making ranging from the politics of the Cuban Missile Crisis and the early Vietnam War, to economics, science, and revolutionary war. Accepting that strategic studies is not yet its own discipline, but that strategic thinking can be formalized, this course sets the foundations of strategy for later application specifically to air, space, and cyberspace.⁸⁴

The second course, *Foundations of Military Theory*, is a sixteen-lesson study of various military theorists’ writings. Authors range from the ancients of Sun Tzu and Thucydides, the 19th Century giants of Clausewitz and Jomini, to the 20th Century theories of B.H. Liddell Hart and John Boyd, among others. The course avoids many theories on modern topics such as air, space, cyberspace, and irregular war, leaving those topics for later courses.⁸⁵ The course introduces methods to critically evaluate the theories through the “criteria of logic and evidence.”⁸⁶ In

⁸²SAASS Home Page, <http://www.au.af.mil/au/saass/curriculum.asp>, accessed 27 October 2011; emphasis added.

⁸³SAASS Foundations of Military Strategy website, http://www.au.af.mil/au/aui/school/saass/saass601_AY11-12.htm, accessed 21 December 2011.

⁸⁴SAASS 601 Syllabus, AY 2012, 2.

⁸⁵SAASS 600 Syllabus, AY 2012, 3. These theories are studied in-depth during later courses.

⁸⁶Schultz information paper, 2.

addition to the final writing assignment, students prepare a one-page point paper and a short presentation on their personal theory of war.

History of Airpower I and *II*, cover fifteen and sixteen lessons respectively. The first course focuses on the history of airpower in and between the World Wars, examining the theories of Giulio Douhet, Hugh Trenchard, Billy Mitchell, and John Slessor, as well as the campaigns that were fought therein. Critical analysis is applied to both the theories and their application in war. History of Airpower II covers post-World War II, primarily from the U.S. perspective, including the Korean War, the Jet Age, commercial airlines, nuclear strategy, Vietnam, Desert Storm, Kosovo, and others.

Sandwiched between the two airpower history courses, *Strategy and Coercion* expands the discussion of strategy over fifteen lessons with a survey of U.S. national security strategies and international relations theories. The underlying questions examined are, “How does the world hang together? And, what role does force play in the world?”⁸⁷ The strategies of compellence, deterrence and coercion, both nuclear and conventional, are discussed at length, focusing on “the use of airpower to pursue and support these national security objectives.”⁸⁸

Technology and Military Innovation spends ten lessons looking at how technology has affected warfare and what “patterns of inquiry” led to such innovations.⁸⁹ The course examines the “theoretical frameworks for technological change” and the relationship between humans and technology.⁹⁰ It has three objectives: develop analytical frameworks to understand the relationship between technology, innovation, and the military; recognize the “propositional

⁸⁷SAASS 632 – Strategy and Coercion Syllabus, AY 2012, 2.

⁸⁸Schultz Information Paper, 3.

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰SAASS 660 – Technology and Military Innovation Syllabus, AY 2012, 2.

inventories” which are the basis of technological change theories and military innovation; and understand the technological influence on the military through case studies.⁹¹

Information, Cyberspace, and Cyber Power, satisfies the SAASS mission inclusion of “cyber power” in its mission statement. This ten-lesson course examines the significant impact of information on modern warfare, including gathering, analyzing, and dissemination. The course goal is to comprehend “the relationship between cyber warfare and grand strategy.”⁹²

Space Power and National Security is a ten-lesson study of all things related to the military’s use of space. Themes include policy, strategy, and organization. Particular emphasis is placed on space weaponization and the issues of space force organization within the Department of Defense (DOD).⁹³

Irregular Warfare lumps all the forms of warfare outside the realm of major combat operations into twelve lessons. It seeks to define irregular warfare and understand how such conflict differs from past conflicts.⁹⁴ The course explores the use of airpower, limited as it is, in wars encompassing “revolutionary and counterrevolutionary insurgent warfare” as well as terrorism and radical Islamist movements.⁹⁵

The thirteen lessons of *Strategy and Campaign Planning* provides the students an opportunity to “make strategy” through the application of the previous lessons. The course is divided into three blocks plus a week of wargaming. The first block focuses on translating strategy into plans. It incorporates the concepts of operational design as well as center of gravity and effects based operations analysis. The second block looks at doctrine related to planning, including JOPP and other service planning doctrines. The third block consists of a condensed,

⁹¹SAASS 660 – Technology and Military Innovation Syllabus, AY 2012, 2-3.

⁹²Schultz Information Paper, 3.

⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴SAASS 644 – Irregular Warfare Syllabus, AY 2012, 4.

⁹⁵Schultz Information Paper, 3.

five day version of the senior level Air and Space Operations Center training program.⁹⁶ The course is followed by a one week Theater Campaign Wargame (TCW) in which the students, joined by AMSP and the Marine School of Advanced Warfighting (SAW) students, must “develop strategic-level and theater-level guidance from political descriptions of two separate situations.”⁹⁷ This is the only planning exercise that the SAASS students experience during the course.

Defense Policy is the last course in the curriculum. Over twelve lessons, this course looks at U.S. policy, the policy makers, and the policy making process, from the President down to the individual services. Additionally, the course covers topics of “current and potential US defense concerns” as well as regional concerns likely to be a factor for defense policy in the future.⁹⁸

In addition to the eleven academic courses listed, SAASS students also write a thesis paper 60-100 pages in length and finish the year with an oral comprehensive exam. Graduates receive a Master of Philosophy in Military Strategy.⁹⁹

⁹⁶SAASS 643 – Strategy and Campaign Planning Syllabus, AY 2011, 2-3.

⁹⁷*Ibid.*, 2.

⁹⁸SAASS 643 – Strategy and Campaign Planning Syllabus, AY 2011, 2.

⁹⁹Schultz Information Paper, 1. Prior to the re-designation in 2010, graduates received a Master Degree in Airpower Art and Science.

Chapter 3 - Post-Graduate Experience

The purpose of this chapter is to examine post-graduate assignments as well as graduate and commander's or supervisor's survey data. This information will help determine whether AMSP and SAASS are meeting their desired outcomes, providing the graduates the necessary tools to succeed in their utilization assignment, and whether or not commanders and supervisors are satisfied with the graduates from the institutions.

Post-graduate assignments are a telling indicator of what the Army and Air Force expects from its ASGs. Because of this, there is a solid connection between the intent of each military department, as discussed earlier, and follow-on assignments. Neither school attaches a Skill Identifier or Specialty Code to its graduates. The typical intent is for graduates to be assigned to a "utilization tour" and then re-enter the pool of officer peers for further assignments. That being said, both services can identify their respective ASGs and utilize them as needed throughout their career, though doing so is not either service's intent. Instead, following such utilization on a staff assignment, graduates are expected to use their knowledge and experience as, according to Wass de Czege, a "leavening influence...by their competence and impact on other officers."¹⁰⁰

AMSP Post-Graduate Assignments

AMSP graduates' expectations have not changed significantly from Wass de Czege's initial vision as "staff officers at division and corps and who can better serve in those key jobs at higher Army joint and combined staffs requiring broad integration and conceptualization skills."¹⁰¹ Today, officers can expect a "utilization tour" of one year post-graduation, where they will primarily serve on a corps or division staff, typically on the G-5 planning staff. As one AOASF Fellow, Colonel Jeffrey Goble, put it in his monograph, "if you ask most Army officers, not associated with the school in any way, they will tell you that SAMS is the planning school,

¹⁰⁰Wass de Czege, "Army Staff College Level Training Study – Final Report," F-4.

¹⁰¹Ibid.

and SAMS graduates are planners.”¹⁰² Much of this stereotype is a result of the success of AMSP planners on General Norman Schwarzkopf’s CENTCOM staff, who spearheaded the planning of the ground campaign in Operation Desert Storm.¹⁰³ The success of the ground campaign was due in large part to the skills of four AMSP graduates, who earned the now common moniker for AMSP graduates – “Jedi Knights.”¹⁰⁴

Army Regulation (AR) 614-100, *Officer Assignment Policies, Details, and Transfers*, specifies that AMSP graduates will “serve one utilization tour, at least 12 months long, in critical battle staff positions within...division, corps, or equivalent [Headquarters].”¹⁰⁵ This assignment, called a “Tier 1 assignment,” is considered the final year of education for AMSP graduates.¹⁰⁶

AMSP graduates can expect to be called upon later in their careers as well. This program, labeled Tier II, covers AOASF graduates, AMSP lieutenant colonel graduates, and all other AMSP graduates later in their career. The flavor of assignments is similar, with AR 614-100 stipulating that Tier II assignments will be to “operational/strategic planning, joint positions, doctrine writing, or positions that sustain currency/development in the officer’s branch or functional area.”¹⁰⁷

AMSP’s current mission statement does not specify that AMSP will create planners, but instead focuses on a broad definition of creating “agile and adaptive leaders who are critical and

¹⁰²Jeffrey Goble, “Wants and Needs: SAMS’ Relationship with the Army” (Monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, 2008), iii.

¹⁰³Benson, “Educating the Army’s Jedi,” 195. For a complete discussion of the Desert Storm AMSP planners, see Chapter Six of this dissertation.

¹⁰⁴*Ibid.*, 288.

¹⁰⁵Department of the Army Headquarters, Army Regulation (AR) 614-100, *Officer Assignment Policies, Details, and Transfers* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 10 January 2006), 21.

¹⁰⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷*Ibid.*, 21.

creative thinkers who produce viable options to solve operational problems.”¹⁰⁸ The link between the two is that the skills to be a problem solver and the skills required for a successful planner are much the same. The intention of the Army is not likely solely focused on a one-year utilization tour, as Colonel Goble suggests, but on all the years following. Therefore, the education is necessarily more broad and complete than a narrow focus on planning skills.

Historically, AMSP graduates have done well following their utilization tour, often commanding battalions and brigades. Historically, the command selection rate has been more than double the rate of non-AMSP graduates.¹⁰⁹

AMSP Surveys

AMSP end-of-year surveys are scheduled by the CGSC Quality Assurance Office (QAO) to be conducted biennially. The surveys were inconsistent in their presentation of the data, particularly student comments. The survey program does not attempt to reach graduates after they have finished the course and only one survey has been conducted of commanders who have AMSP graduate subordinates. The author utilized surveys conducted in 2005 and 2007.¹¹⁰ The 2005 survey included 2004 and 2005 graduates of AMSP while the 2007 survey was given to Division and Corps commanders, all of whom had AMSP graduates on their staff.

The graduate and commander surveys revealed few shortcomings of the program with respect to the operational and strategic focus. Most graduates supported the curriculum as “appropriate for meeting the needs of the armed services.”¹¹¹ One concern addressed relates to the appropriate context of instruction, which can be connected to the Army-centric operational focus

¹⁰⁸AMSP 12-01 Curriculum Overview Briefing, 20 May 2011.

¹⁰⁹Thomas Graves, “School of Advanced Military Studies Selection Process Overview” (presented to potential SAMS applicants, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2011).

¹¹⁰There are significant inconsistencies throughout the AMSP survey program, which are discussed in the Recommendations section.

¹¹¹AMSP Program Evaluation AY 2006, i.

of AMSP. Graduates reported a “concern for critical concepts in jointness integration.”¹¹² Though not specific to a lack of strategic focus, the lack of education regarding “jointness integration” points to a lack of strategic education. Any legitimate military strategy will consider all military means available.

Though the AMSP focus is not strategy, it did identify one quality of its graduates as officers who “understand the strategic setting.”¹¹³ This “understand” fits in the context of the school’s focus in its recognition that the strategic setting affects operational and tactical plans, which is the focus of an AMSP graduate. This point is made obvious in the first question posed to graduates, which focused on their role as “operational planners.”¹¹⁴

Returning to specific issues brought up during the survey, 26% of respondents expressed concern regarding jointness when answering “How might the AMSP description of ‘Be, Know, Do’ be improved?”¹¹⁵ When asked “What experiences or challenges have you encountered that you were not prepared for?” 20% noted issues regarding “combined forces and coalition integration” while 19% focused on “issues of jointness such as leading a joint planning group and integrating join services in planning.”¹¹⁶ Though the report did not detail the specific issues, it appears that the graduates were concerned about AMSP providing them the proper education to operate in a joint or combined environment versus an Army-only environment.¹¹⁷ This Army-centric focus was also noted in the responses regarding exercises. 44% recommended “more or

¹¹²Ibid., i.

¹¹³Ibid., 1-2.

¹¹⁴Ibid., 1-3.

¹¹⁵Ibid., 3-1.

¹¹⁶Ibid., 3-2.

¹¹⁷AMSP Program Evaluation AY 2006, 3-2.

different exercises,” while the recommended changes focused on “collaborative planning, interagency, and other recommendations related to integrated forces and planning.”¹¹⁸

In contrast to concerns of a lack of jointness, graduates did not express concern regarding an understanding of the strategic context. When asked if AMSP prepared them to “understand the strategic setting,” 94% of the graduates agreed.¹¹⁹ The use of “understand” is notable in its simplicity regarding the level of learning required. On Bloom’s Taxonomy scale of learning, *Understanding* is the second lowest level of learning, preceded only by *Remembering*. Most learning levels above *Understanding* should be applicable to an AMSP graduate in regards to strategy, notably *Applying*, *Analyzing*, and *Evaluating*.¹²⁰ Supporting this, observations made by the Quality Assurance Office (QAO) during the survey period found that lessons were “taught at a higher learning level than stated in lesson plans and advance sheets,” therefore the stated objective of “understanding the strategic context” was likely exceeded during the students’ academic year.¹²¹

The Commander’s survey reflects a high satisfaction with AMSP graduates. The survey confirms the general view in the Army that AMSP graduates are *planners* and that AMSP should continue to focus on “developing planners.”¹²² The attributes that commanders valued most in their AMSP graduates were: planning, thinking, communicating, team work, and problem solving. All these attributes contribute to a graduates’ ability to get a planning team from theoretical point A and see it through to its endpoint B through actionable plans.

¹¹⁸AMSP Program Evaluation AY 2006, 3-2.

¹¹⁹Ibid., 3-5. The study identifies “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” as “favorable” responses.

¹²⁰Lorin Anderson, “Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning Domains,” Big Dog and Little Dog's Performance Juxtaposition, <http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/hrd/bloom.html> (accessed 24 March 2012).

¹²¹AMSP Program Evaluation AY 2006, 3-23.

¹²²Commander survey, 1.

In light of this summary, commanders were generally satisfied with the breadth of education that graduates were receiving, including the balance of tactical, operational, and strategic focus. 84% agreed that “AMSP graduates are prepared to work in the strategic environment.”¹²³ One commander noted that his AMSP graduates were “Able to think tactically as well as strategically” while another noted that they “Tend to have broader views that go beyond the operational plane.”¹²⁴

When asked “What should be the primary focus of SAMS?” some discord was noted in the commander’s comments. One commander wrote, “Build FA59 strategists elsewhere” while another wanted “Lots of tactical, less operational (but some), and even less strategic.”¹²⁵ The inference is that some commanders were not interested in their planners thinking at the strategic level. Others presented contrary positions. One commander used the Bloom’s Taxonomy verbiage when he said that graduates should “Understand the strategic environment, but translate [sic] into tactical tasks for subordinates.”¹²⁶ Yet another stated that graduates “Must have a baseline understanding of the strategic level of war” and “an understanding of how the strategic and operational levels of war impacts tactical actions.”¹²⁷ Another put it into practical terms when he said that graduates need the “ability to translate Strategic and Operational guidance into tactical (task and purpose) mission [orders].”¹²⁸ Such sentiment seems to be the consensus for the commanders surveyed regarding the desired operational and strategic focus for AMSP students.

Though there seems to be some disagreement about AMSP’s shift of focus in recent years toward the operational and strategic context at the expense of the tactical focus, the consensus

¹²³Commander survey, 10.

¹²⁴Ibid., 4.

¹²⁵Ibid., 5.

¹²⁶Commander Survey, 5.

¹²⁷Ibid.

¹²⁸Commander Survey, 4.

among graduates and commanders is that the school's graduates provide a beneficial perspective and capability at the Corps and Division level.

SAASS Post-Graduate Assignments

Air Force Headquarters provides guidance for SAASS graduate assignments. The intent is to place graduates in jobs with a “Strategy and Planning Focus.”¹²⁹ Unlike the Army, which has a fairly consistent set of assignments that will be filled by AMSP graduates, the Air Force vets its assignment list annually. The intent is to keep the utilization jobs current, dropping jobs that no longer require a SAASS graduate, and adding emerging jobs that would benefit from a SAASS graduate. Each command is allowed to nominate jobs with a requirement for an ASG and any other requirements. AFPC and Air Force Strategic Plans (A5XS) staffs prioritize the list in three tiers – Critical, Essential, and Other.¹³⁰ The SAASS commandant then distributes this list to students. The commandant takes the students assignment preferences and, with AFPC, assigns the students. Some officers will return to an operational assignment, particularly if they have been selected for command or if they need to return to fly. The expectation is that the Air Force will utilize these officers in an ASG staff position during a later assignment.

Though SAASS has only been in business for twenty years, it has seen notable success from its graduates. Such success may be more a factor of the quality of officer that the program selects (who would have done well regardless) and less what SAASS did for the graduate. Either way, the list is impressive. Of 619 U.S Air Force graduates as of June 2011, thirty-six have reached flag rank or Senior Executive Service equivalent. Additionally, 98% of the graduates who have met an O-6 board have been promoted, with half being promoted “Below the Zone.” For those who meet a general officer board, 30% have been promoted, compared to the overall

¹²⁹AF/A3/5 Memo.

¹³⁰Ibid.

Air Force average of 6%.¹³¹ SAASS has successfully recruited top officers and graduated officers more capable of serving the force in leadership positions, not just strategists.

Headquarters Air Force and AFPC do not provide guidance as to the utilization of its ASGs following their one utilization tour. The intent is that the graduates move on to progress and advance within their peer group. They do not receive any special identifier, though if needed, AFPC and SAASS can identify graduates.

One notable opportunity for SAASS graduates is obtaining a PhD in Military Strategy through follow-on study. This “Lorenz Fellowship,” offered to the top third of SAASS graduates, allows officers to dedicate one year of study towards a PhD in lieu of in-residence Senior Developmental Education (SDE).¹³² Because this program is an extension of the SAASS curriculum and therefore tied to its accrediting association, it is only available to SAASS graduates and not Air Force graduates of other advanced studies programs.

SAASS Surveys

In contrast to the AMSP survey program, SAASS has a more consistent survey system that includes surveys taken at mid-course, end of course, one year post-graduate, three years post-graduate, five years post-graduate, and a biennial supervisor survey. Over the ten years of survey data made available to the author, the questions have remained consistent.

Overall, there is an extremely high satisfaction rate among SAASS graduates. Since the survey has not changed since its inception, the school is able to analyze aggregate data and trends. In response to “Did SAASS accomplish its objectives?” in relation to five broad objectives, the average score on a scale of 1-5 remains steady around 4.7.¹³³ Examining only the data provides

¹³¹Schultz Information Paper, 1.

¹³²Ibid., 4.

¹³³SAASS 2009-2010 Outcomes Assessment Report, Everett Dolman, March 2010, 21. The broad objectives are “to (1) develop critical thinking skills, (2) provide an in-depth understanding of military theory, (3) provide an in-depth understanding of airpower theory, (4) provide a solid knowledge base in

little insight except to confirm that the school that it is achieving its objectives. When the evaluating individual courses, the data proves more useful. For example, during the early 2000s, SAASS spent five weeks at Hurlburt Field, Florida for the Command and Control Warrior Advanced Course (C2WAC). This was due to the influence of some Air Force generals who felt that SAASS graduates should be experts in Air and Space Operations Center (AOC) operations.¹³⁴ The student and faculty response was consistently negative (except that it gave students time to work on their thesis). The result was a shortening of the course to its current five-day version held at SAASS.

Beyond the scaled survey data, the comments provided by graduates and supervisors are the most valuable portion of the survey. They provide a better, though varied, glimpse at what the graduates and supervisors think are important issues regarding the school's product. The following is not quantitative, but a qualitative assessment by the author as to trends within the comments.

The comments given by students and supervisors point to a lack of application - the third phase of the education model. Comments (mostly in bullet form) from the 2002 survey include, "SAASS desperately need a practicum or two to pull it all together in a cogent way," "I never really got to try to develop an air power strategy, except at [Command and Control Warrior Advanced Course]," "We need an exercise to apply the theory to an 'operation'," "void in PME. SAASS's objectives are on the strategic level of war...ACSC seems to focus on the strategic level at the expense of airpower application at the operational level," "Weakest point...do more/reorient focus some more toward more practical application of airpower...lots of ethereal concepts and too little operational art," and "SAASS could have added more operational art

airpower history with which the student can evaluate military and airpower theory, and (5) provide and understanding of political influences on the development and employment of airpower." On the 1-5 scale, 4 is "Satisfactory" while 5 is "Very Satisfactory."

¹³⁴Harold R. Winton, interviewed by author, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, 17 January 2012. The interview adhered to Army policies of informed consent in compliance with Federal law.

education/exposure.”¹³⁵ Some notable comments from the 2006 survey included “Focus on the joint planning more since many of us ended up as AOs [Action Officers] on planning staffs, which was a far cry from the Wardenesk [sic] Think Tank strategist position we envisioned,” and “Add more campaign planning modules...apply your airpower thesis to determine validity.”¹³⁶ One notable supervisor comment was a need for, “greater focus on the operational level of war. Also, include the significant role the Army will play in any plan that we build as airman. I have noticed a trend in SAASS grads [believing] that we really can build our own air campaign without getting army [buy-in].”¹³⁷

Though the graduates and supervisors are overall highly satisfied with the results that SAASS produces, when given the opportunity to help improve the school, two common themes arise: a lack of emphasis on application and an underemphasis on the operational art.

¹³⁵Dennis M. Drew, 2002 SAASS Outcomes Assessment Report, November 2002, 68-114.

¹³⁶Dennis M. Drew, 2006 SAASS Outcomes Assessment Report, December 2006, 79-80.

¹³⁷*Ibid.*, 103.

Chapter 4 - Findings

School Purpose

Throughout this study, it became clear that both schools have stayed true to their original intent and, for the most part, they continue to meet the intent of their service leadership. Both have become the “leavening influence” that Wass de Czege envisioned such a program.¹³⁸ Up to this point, the impact of ASGs is more noticeable in the Army than the Air Force. This may be a factor of time (twenty-eight years versus twenty-one years) and the number of graduates (1,523 AMSP vs. 619 SAASS). AMSP graduates have reached four-star rank while the senior ranking SAASS graduates are currently Lieutenant Generals. Seeing that the targeted influence of AMSP graduates is their year-long assignment on a planning staff post-graduation, their impact is also felt sooner on those Corps and Division staffs. An excellent example are the AMSP graduates who worked on the CENTCOM staff planning the Desert Storm ground campaign.¹³⁹ Since SAASS strives to produce strategists, the nature of strategy would tend to delay their influence until they reach flag rank, perhaps not until Lieutenant General and above. Therefore, the greatest impact of SAASS graduates may be yet to come.

Regarding AMSP intent, though the mission statement encompasses many capabilities of what a graduate should possess, the clear intent is that ASMP graduates will be operational planners. This is reflected in their assignments to planning staffs, in the commander survey, and is produced by a curriculum emphasizing operational art and planning through multiple practical exercises and twelve weeks of planning exercises. A graduate is educated to think critically and creatively about a problem, but also learns to develop, describe, and produce actionable solutions.

¹³⁸Wass de Czege, “Army Staff College Level Training Study – Final Report,” F-4.

¹³⁹Benson, “Educating the Army’s Jedi,” 155-197. The placement of SAMS graduates at Combatant Command level may seem contradictory to the previous mention of placement at Division and Corps level. Such placement has never been the norm, though AOASF or SAMS graduates on a second staff tour may do so. The SAMS planners were brought in to CENTCOM for the ground campaign planning and their efforts cemented the school as the Army’s “place to turn for superb planners.” – Benson, “Educating the Army’s Jedi,” 195.

Regarding SAASS's intent, the mission of educating strategists has remained steadfast throughout its history. The strong emphasis on rigorous academics through small seminars and a solid PhD faculty has succeeded in taking highly successful officers and refining them for a continuing productive career. As mentioned earlier, the impact of creating *strategists* at SAASS has not been fully realized throughout the Air Force, but the impact of *critical thinking officers* who advise senior leadership has had an impact on the Air Force's upper echelons.

Post-Graduate Experience

Two trends were noted in both schools, each school somewhat opposing the other. First, graduates, supervisors, and commanders are overwhelmingly positive about the product that both schools produce. If neither school changed from their current methods, a large majority would be satisfied. For AMSP, this satisfaction is more difficult to assess due to the lack of follow-up surveys, but such satisfaction is apparent when senior leadership speaks to the students.¹⁴⁰

Second, the author found that AMSP's limited study of strategic level thinking and SAASS'S limited study of operational art hinders the preparation of their graduates to excel in both staff and leadership positions. Shortcomings were noted in the single-minded focus of AMSP on the year following graduation as operational planners. Undoubtedly, this is where the impact of AMSP is most significant, but this approach fails to understand operations holistically. Returning to the ADP 3-0 definition, operational art is, "the pursuit of strategic objectives, in whole or in part, through the arrangement of tactical actions in time, space, and purpose." This definition requires two things of operational artists. First, they must be tactically proficient in order to arrange tactical actions. Second, they must be strategically savvy in order to be able to interlink the operation to the strategic objective. AMSP falls short of creating strategically minded operational artists in their pursuit of creating "Jedi Knight" planners. Many of these same

¹⁴⁰During the author's year at AMSP, every senior Army officer speaking to the AMSP students has praised the graduates and SAMS as a whole for what it produces.

graduates will have the opportunity to expand their strategic horizons at schools such as USAWC or NWC, but they may wish they had that education earlier in their career.

However, AMSP's imbalance of effort pales in comparison to SAASS. Undoubtedly, SAASS produces graduates capable of thinking 360 degrees around a problem through a rigorous academic program. Though when it comes time to applying the theory and evidence, graduates and supervisors appear frustrated that there is a disconnect – a lack of ability to apply knowledge. Similarly, graduates who end up as planners are more so frustrated that they are being asked to do two things of which they are unprepared: think operationally and create actionable plans. A notable trend emerges when examining the list of assignments for Air Force advanced studies graduates. Of the 102 jobs listed, 42 contained “plans” or “planner” in the duty title. Another 43 described some form of planning within the duty description. Fully 85 of 102 jobs clearly indicated that the officer would be creating, vetting, and refining plans of some form or another. Therefore, when the SAASS Vice Commandant, Dr. Stephen Chiabotti, says that SAASS, “produce[s] *strategists*—not leaders, not warriors, not even planners,” he may have missed the mark that the Air Force has set for the school.¹⁴¹

Faculty

The similar mix of civilian and military instructors points to both schools' emphasis on the need for varying perspectives in a military officer's education. Another layer down, differences arise that are worth comparing. On the civilian side, there is less to contrast. Both AMSP and SAASS have an all PhD civilian faculty, however the military officers are of two different breeds, owing primarily to the contrasting focus of each school.¹⁴² SAMS produces its military instructors through the AOASF program. These Lieutenant Colonels and Colonels have typically commanded through battalion level and experience a year of study similar to AMSP,

¹⁴¹Chiabotti, 74.

¹⁴²Some faculty may not be PhD complete when hired, but all are at least PhD candidates.

which culminates with the award of a Master's degree prior to their year of teaching. The intent is to bring high performing officers in as instructors, primarily for the twelve weeks of exercise, and keep them for only two years in order to remain competitive for brigade command and promotion. During the academic courses, the military instructor has limited input while the civilian professor leads the discussion. During the exercises, the military instructors take the primary role as both instructor and acting commanders for the scenarios.

In contrast to AMSP, all the military professors at SAASS are PhDs and most are SAASS graduates.¹⁴³ One or two SAASS students are selected to attend a civilian PhD program immediately following their year at SAASS, to then return to the operational force for command and promotion, and then to return to SAASS for a three year assignment. In essence, these officers' SAASS utilization tour is a PhD program, followed by a return to operations with opportunity to command, with their senior service school and staff time spent instructing at SAASS. The benefit is PhD officers who have a similar academic experience as their civilian counterparts. Therefore, one civilian or military instructor at SAASS facilitates a seminar, not two, requiring fewer instructors per day in seminar. This model matches SAASS's lack of emphasis on practical application of the academic material, because SAASS loses what ASMP gains with a military instructor in each seminar: the input of an experienced officer regarding application.

Student-Faculty Ratio

The student-faculty is also a product of how each school produces its military instructors. SAMS produces enough AOASF graduates to place one military instructor in each seminar. With seven summer and two winter seminars, the school strives to have 14-16 students per seminar. For the 2011-2012 summer class, one military instructor was selected for brigade command,

¹⁴³If there are no SAAS students interested or qualified for the PhD SAASS instructor program, it is opened up to other Air Force officers, which occasionally results in a military instructor who is not a SAASS graduate.

therefore a seminar was dropped and the class sizes were increased. AMSP currently has 16-18 students per seminar, with a 16.9 average.¹⁴⁴ Prior to the school's expansion from six seminars, the average number of students per seminar was 13-14.¹⁴⁵ Many, including Dr. Winton, agree that even that ratio is detrimental to a graduate-level discussion.¹⁴⁶ Dr. Winton's experience at both AMSP and SAASS has been that nine to ten students is the "ideal model for graduate level military education."¹⁴⁷ He added that a seminar of sixteen was "dysfunctional."¹⁴⁸ Given that two instructors are present in each AMSP seminar, the instructor-to-student ratio is closer to 8:1, but since there is only one group discussion ongoing, the value of the second instructor is limited to adding a military perspective on the topic. The result is that many students are left out of the discourse so vital to learning.

AMSP has twenty civilian faculty for nine seminars, creating a 7.5:1 student-to-PhD ratio. This is a challenge for the civilians in advising the students on their monograph papers, though the split start of two winter seminars spreads some of the workload. If nine military instructors are included, the student-to-instructor ratio goes down to 5:1, though this does not reduce the number of students that each PhD advises on their thesis. Averaging out the eighty

¹⁴⁴The class being discussed, 12-01, is currently short one military instructor. Therefore, the class was compressed from seven seminars to six. This effectively increased the class size from fourteen or fifteen students to the current seventeen or eighteen students.

¹⁴⁵Army News Archives, "School of Advanced Military Studies expands program," http://www.army.mil/article/16073/School_of_Advanced_Military_Studies_expands_program/," accessed 18 February 2012.

¹⁴⁶Joe Cuseo, "The Empirical Case Against Large Class Size" (Marymount College, Publication Year), in UW-Madison Steenbock Memorial Library, http://steenbock.library.wisc.edu/instruct/class_support/imd/Week%2013%20Cuseo.pdf (accessed 24 March 2012). Though this paper is focused on first year college students in large classroom settings, many of the findings are appropriate for considering the positive effects of small classroom sizes.

¹⁴⁷Winton, interview, 2001, 75.

¹⁴⁸Ibid. Dr. Winton's reference was to the interviewer's USAWC seminar, but applies at AMSP as well.

AMSP academic lessons per year, each professor will facilitate about two courses, thirty-six lessons, or twelve weeks of instruction each year.¹⁴⁹

SAASS has steadfastly maintained a 10:1 student-to-faculty ratio within the seminars and strives for a 3:1 ratio for the whole school. The Academic Year 2011-2012 includes fifteen PhD instructors and fifty-nine students, creating a 3.3:1 ratio. When the school reduces to forty-two to forty-five students in the summer of 2012, the 3:1 ratio will be restored.¹⁵⁰ Since both military and civilian instructors are PhDs, only one instructor facilitates each seminar. Averaging out the 141 lessons in SAASS, this equates to about four courses facilitated by each instructor over fifty-six lessons, or fourteen weeks of instruction.

Curriculum

Each school's curriculum supports its mission and focus. AMSP has eighty academic lessons over the course and normally meets three times a week for three and a half hour per lesson. This equates to ten and a half hours per week, twenty-six weeks, and 280 hours of academics.¹⁵¹ AMSP also holds twelve weeks of planning exercises, meeting daily, with two weeks set aside for a staff ride. One week is set aside for the monograph with a two-week winter break. SAASS has 141 academic lessons and meets four times per week for two hours per lesson. This equates to eight hours per week, about thirty-five weeks of academics, totaling 282 hours of academics. SAASS has a one-week air ride, one week of exercise planning, one week of wargaming, six weeks of thesis research, and a two-week winter break. AMSP is forty-seven weeks long while SAASS is fifty weeks.

¹⁴⁹Because instructors often teach a morning and afternoon seminar, the actual number of weeks spent instructing may be less.

¹⁵⁰Timothy Schultz, e-mail message to author, 2 April 2005. The class size has been directed by the Air Force Chief of Staff and will remain at that level unless budgeted for another increase. The class will include thirty-six Air Force, two sister service, two Reserve, and four or five international officers.

¹⁵¹The data is a little off because the final course, Future Operational Art, a twelve-lesson course, meets four times a week, thus eliminating a fourth week.

These numbers combined with an examination of the syllabus give a telling story. Though the academic hours in class are almost identical, SAASS meets sixty-one more times. More books and more topics are covered, which reinforces SAASS's academic focus. AMSP's twelve weeks of planning exercises reinforces the school's reputation for producing planners. SAASS, before the 2011 academic year, had a one-week air ride in the Fall and a one week wargame in the Spring. Due to budget reductions, the air ride is currently a trip to the World War II Museum in New Orleans, Louisiana and the USS Alabama in Mobile, Alabama.¹⁵² In this form, the air ride serves a limited academic purpose. Due to faculty limitations, SAASS cancelled the 2012 wargame, which is not surprising, given the school's lack of emphasis on application.

¹⁵²Schultz e-mail.

Chapter 5 - Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusions

As one looks closer at the varying emphasis of operational art versus strategy at AMSP and SAASS, the similarities become more notable than the differences. Consider that the Air Force defines as *strategic attack* as “offensive action...aimed at generating effects that most directly achieve our national security objectives.”¹⁵³ Compare that to *operational art* being, “the pursuit of strategic objectives, in whole or in part, through the arrangement of tactical actions in time, space, and purpose.”¹⁵⁴ Though the Air Force labels it *strategic*, both schools and their services are seeking to optimize the effects on strategy by sequencing tactical actions in time, space and purpose – they’re both talking of and executing operational art. The difference is that SAASS focuses on the strategy, what it is and what it should be, while AMSP focuses on the operation – how to plan and conduct it in such a manner so that it helps to achieve the strategic purpose set forth.

Though the schools similarities are a notable unifier, the differences are worth further study by school leadership in an effort to improve. The previous sections have clearly delineated the different approaches each school takes in achieving their objectives. Those differences come down to three types. First is each school’s balance of theory, evidence, and application. Second is the balance between strategy and operational art studies. The final difference relates to the military faculty construct and the student-instructor ratios.

AMSP Recommendations

Though the school is meeting the Army’s intent of educating operational planners, the persistent conflict of the last eleven years has proven a need for officers, leaders, and planners to be able to understand the strategic context in order to create successful operational plans. Therein

¹⁵³ Air Force Headquarters, Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 1-2, *Air Force Glossary Supplement to JP 1-02* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, May 2003), 40.

¹⁵⁴ Department of the Army Headquarters, ADP 3-0, 9.

resides the “art” in operational art. If the school acknowledges the imbalance, then the re-balancing can be found through the SAASS model of greater academic emphasis on the strategic context. It is no surprise that the Strategic Context of the Operational Art is one of the shortest courses in AMSP. Likewise, many of the campaigns studied in the Evolution of Operational Art would benefit from more depth at the potential cost of fewer campaigns covered. Most, if not all of the campaigns studied in EOA are rich in both strategic and operational lessons, both of which could be studied in subsequent lessons.

Nothing can be added to a curriculum without sacrificing something else. With the aforementioned recommendation in mind, it would be prudent to consider reducing the twelve weeks of planning exercises. In general, limiting most exercises to one week prevents the exercises from devolving into a briefing-focused effort instead of being plan-focused. Finally, other opportunities to gain time include reducing or removing both the staff ride preparation week and the Military Capabilities and Planning week. Both were commonly regarded as having limited utility for the students.

The student-faculty ratio during seminar needs to be addressed or the reputation of AMSP and its graduates may begin to suffer. If AMSP purports to be a graduate level course, then it must be staffed appropriately for the number of students that the Army wants produced, or it must reduce the number of students. The Army, like all budget constrained institutions, will always want more of a good product without having to pay for it. In the end, someone always pays. If the Army insists on 135-145 graduates each year, then it must provide an adequate number of faculty and staff to reduce the student-faculty ratio in the seminars down near twelve.

If the goal is to reach a 12:1 ratio in class while remaining at the current student level, six PhDs are required to teach each course twice a day. This would require two additional summer seminars and one additional winter seminar for a total of twelve seminars. In order to keep the

current teaching requirements the same, seven additional PhDs would need to be added for a total of twenty-seven.¹⁵⁵

These are challenging numbers, but accomplishable if two things are changed. First, only one instructor teaches each seminar and second, the AOASF program is replaced or supplemented by an officer PhD program.¹⁵⁶ Incorporating military PhD instructors would allow them to facilitate courses, yet also keep them available to facilitate the planning exercises. The SAASS model for creating military PhDs through student volunteers is a solid foundation. Many AMSP students show a passion for teaching and it would be a wise investment (and a leavening influence in the civilian academic world) for the Army to consider sending them to get a PhD while still allowing them to compete for command. Even in the 2012 summer AMSP class, there are multiple PhD candidate students. Accomplishing this would take a shift in Army culture – one that would consider a recently graduated PhD for command. If such a culture change is insurmountable, the program could still succeed. It would not be a far reach to say that some AMSP students will not command, but are excellent officers. Such officers could be leveraged to become PhDs and teach at AMSP. Dr. Winton referred to this as the “Russ Glenn” model, which more closely followed Wass de Czege’s “Plan A” for AMSP military instructors.¹⁵⁷ Glenn was an AMSP graduate who returned to teach for a three year assignment.

One program modeled by SAASS and recommended for AMSP is the Lorenz Fellowship mentioned in Chapter Two. Unlike the PhD program for developing instructors, this program could be offered to a select percentage of graduates. Qualifying graduates would graduate as PhD candidates with an All but Dissertation (ABD) status and, instead of attending senior service school later in their career, would be given that year to write their dissertation. Such a program

¹⁵⁵If the desired number is ten per class, seven PhDs per course would be required with 13-14 seminars. Keeping the same teaching load would require thirty-one PhDs.

¹⁵⁶For discussion of the school’s first attempt at a PhD program, see Dr. Benson’s “25 Year History” paper, 43-44.

¹⁵⁷Winton, interview, 2012.

would not take any more time than expected for PME, but would provide another “leavening influence” into senior leadership with additional PhDs. The major challenge in establishing such a program is that the SAASS program combines the education during the year at the Air Command and Staff College, which awards a master’s degree, with the year at SAASS in order to award a Master’s of Philosophy. CGSS would likely require a similar master’s program or potentially require the current CGSS Master of Military Art and Science as a pre-requisite for such a doctoral program.

Another recommendation for AMSP is the SAASS model of classroom rotation. There, each seminar is mixed up when a new course starts. Theoretically this allows each student to interact with every other student in class. AMSP does a decent job of mixing seminars during the planning exercises, but never mixes them between courses. This allows for continuity within each seminar, but misses an opportunity for students to get to know and network with the whole class.

One final recommendation for SAMS relates to the survey program. Although the AMSP survey program is run by a separate office, the lack of consistent graduate and commander surveys limit SAMS’ ability to improve the program. What is useful are the individual course surveys, which AMSP does and SAASS does not accomplish.¹⁵⁸ Additionally, an agreeable solution must be met in regards to who runs the survey program. It would seem that an office dedicated to surveying the students would be more efficient, but CGSC has overwhelmed and incapacitated its two person Quality Assurance Office (QAO). AMSP should either demand a fix to the survey program or take back control. In doing so, AMSP would do well to model the SAASS program by surveying graduates one-year, three-years, and five-years post-graduation, in addition to surveying their supervisors on a regular basis.

¹⁵⁸SAASS accomplishes a mid-year and end of year survey. With eleven different courses, a survey for each would likely not be well received nor responded to by the students.

SAASS Recommendations

Overall, SAASS has proven itself as an outstanding, highly rigorous academic institution. In emphasizing the academic rigor, it has shortchanged the *application* of its education. Wrongly considering such things as planning, planning exercises, and wargames to be in the realm of training and checklists has limited the effectiveness of its graduates in many of their utilization tours. The view that operations are an administrative task is prevalent in Air Force culture, from the view that a squadron *operations* officer handles daily squadron tasks to the view that the Air and Space *Operations* Center (AOC) handles daily operations in an administrative role. Though AMSP's twelve weeks of planning exercises is overkill, such emphasis recognizes that planning is more than following the MDMP checklist. It requires critical and creative thinking, organizational leadership, and teamwork to produce an actionable plan. Such application has very little to do with "training" and everything to do with educated application of theory and evidence – the "art" in operational art.

SAASS has a hint of arrogance when comparing itself to other academic institutes that teach planning. Though institutionally scarred by previous requirement for of five week AOC training, the faculty should reconsider its dislike of application and instead seek to better prepare its students for their career demands. This could take the form of applying a theory of airpower in a wargame scenario, planning an air campaign, or simple white board practical exercises throughout the year to validate course theories. The exact form is not as critical as the learning through doing. The educational process will not be optimized until such application is incorporated.

One opportunity for application resides in the staff ride model. Due to budget constraints, SAASS may be unable to travel to Europe or other locations where great historical air campaigns occurred. SAASS should consider the alternate approach of studying one of the great land campaigns of the Civil War. Though a diversion from airpower studies, such campaigns offer a

historical glimpse at how commanders applied military theory to the enemy and terrain that they faced in order to achieve victory.

Finally, while SAASS has successfully maintained a high caliber student faculty with a healthy mix of officers and civilians, it has not incorporated sister service and foreign officers into its faculty. Such diversity would be of great benefit to the students and the faculty.

Summary

AMSP and SAASS are two outstanding advanced studies programs that have stood the test of time and will continue to do so. Both would be wise to avoid resting on their laurels, but instead seek to better their programs, their faculty, and most importantly, their students. Change for the sake of change profits no one, so every change should be scrutinized for value and necessity. Both schools have much the same roots, thanks in great part to Dr. Harold Winton, but it need not end there. These two schools, both striving to graduate the best possible mid-grade officers, should take the time needed to investigate each other, find what each school is studying, and use such interaction to reflectively question where the individual schools are headed. It is no different than two officers meeting together. If they are true, both will walk away better officers. So too should AMSP and SAASS know that as “iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.”¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁹Proverbs 27:17 (New American Standard Bible).

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